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**RIDLEY-THOMAS TO PROPOSE MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN
INTERNAL CONTROLS IN COUNTY'S PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

*He will introduce a motion next week call for expanding the Probation Department's
Internal Affairs staff and other measures to raise accountability*

LOS ANGELES -- Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today said that published reports of inappropriate contact between some Probation Department employees and juveniles under their care, including allegations of molestation and physical abuse, are "symptoms of a deeper malady that even a decade of U.S. Department of Justice Department intervention has yet to correct."

"Many reforms are necessary to bring the Probation Department in line with standards worthy of a developed society," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, who will introduce a motion next week call for expanding the Probation Department's Internal Affairs staff and other measures to raise accountability.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said "none of these reforms, in areas like education and mental health, can commence before discipline is established in the ranks and management of the department."

He called the Probation Department's Internal Affairs staffing – reportedly eight investigators to review hundreds of complaints leveled against probation officers – "anemic."

“Allegations of abuse can take nearly a year to resolve,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, who is in Washington, D.C., seeking additional funding for the Crenshaw/LAX light rail project. “This glacial pace, instead of deterring wrongdoing, only discourages and deflates the moral of the majority of Probation Department staffers who serve honorably.”

New leadership, he said, “can help restore credibility to the department.”

“I’m pleased to see the early commitment demonstrated by interim director Cal Remington and incoming director Donald Blevins,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “But new leaders need support.”

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